

Lighting The Road To Freedom

New Orleans

Data

News Weekly

"The People's Paper"

Data Zone

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January 27, 2007 40th Year Volume 36 www.ladatanews.com

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COVER STORY

Crime and Punishment: Rescue 504



by: Edwin Buggage
Editor

New Orleans is a city like no other, it is place where everyday citizens celebrate life; revelry and festivities are as common as red beans on Monday, and the Indians gathering at Hunters Field on Super Sunday. One of the other unique customs is an annual event at the foot of the Mississippi River that rings in the New Year where fireworks and the dropping of a baby from the rooftop of Jax Brewery symbolizing hope, brighter days and new beginnings. But the beginning of 2007 unfortunately has been ushered in with a barrage of gunfire and several deaths that has left the city again in the national spotlight with the unenviable stigma of being considered one of America's most dangerous cities.

As the city rang in the New Year it has been marred in the court of public opinion with two high profile murders that was the catalyst for a march by concerned citizens from several backgrounds on city hall. One was the murder of the popular

drummer from the Hot Eight Brass Band Dinerral "Dick" Shavers who appeared in Spike Lee's HBO Documentary, "When the Levees Broke" and the other was filmmaker and humanitarian Helen Hill, who opened her heart and home to many in her mid-city New Orleans neighborhood and saw her life end fatally as she and her husband physician Paul Gailunas were shot inside their home where he is currently recovering.

Bart Everson, who is a neighbor and friend of Hill, is a film editor and social activist spoke at the march against crime and appeared as a guest on CNN's Anderson Cooper 360. Everson says of the violence and the death of his friend; "I initially was shocked, I was screaming I couldn't believe it when I heard about it, she was such a sweet and caring individual they came to visit myself and my wife on New Years Eve and four days later I got the news, but some of the other murders also had me kind of shook up particularly the death of Dinerral Shavers, but when its someone you know it really hits home." In his speech at city hall

Everson received a rousing round of applause as he mirrored the sentiments of outrage that many citizens were feeling at the time speaking about what he felt was the less than stellar performance of several of the city's leaders who were present at the event saying, "Shame on you Mr. Nagin, shame on you Mr. Riley, and shame on you Mr. Jordan."

The event attracted several thousand people and garnered national attention as citizens marched from three different parts of town to have their voices heard on the steps of city hall leaving many of the city's local leaders and law enforcement officials on the hot seat. One individual who carries the brunt of much of the criticism is embattled New Orleans District Attorney Eddie Jordan whose office has been seen by citizens as the revolving door of justice. While Jordan admits there are problems and the system is less than perfect, he says his office is working extra hard to remedy them and change the perception of his office. "I think some of what people are saying about the revolving door is somewhat of a myth, under our

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COVER STORY

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administration we have accepted more trials than the previous DA during his last year in office, and have had a higher conviction rate as well." If numbers and stats are any indication of progress then Jordan is correct in his assertion. Under his administration from 2003-2005 his conviction rate in every statistical category from accepting cases to go to trial, to jury trial conviction rates there has been double digit increases during his tenure in office. Specifically, the conviction rate for jury trials in 2002 under former DA Harry

education, community and crime among other things. He says that the problem with cooperating with law enforcement particularly the police will not happen any time soon because of what he feels is an adversarial relationship that poor and minority communities have had historically with the police. "I don't believe people will cooperate with the police, the DA's Office or anyone in law enforcement because, they

they are also involved in drugs." While illegal drug activity is a serious issue that may contribute to criminal activity, some say that is only a symptom or fallout of other things not working in the society creating generation of predominately young poor black men across this nation with a dim view of their futures and themselves. Addressing those issues may be a better route to stopping crime.

Eddie
Solete
is in his

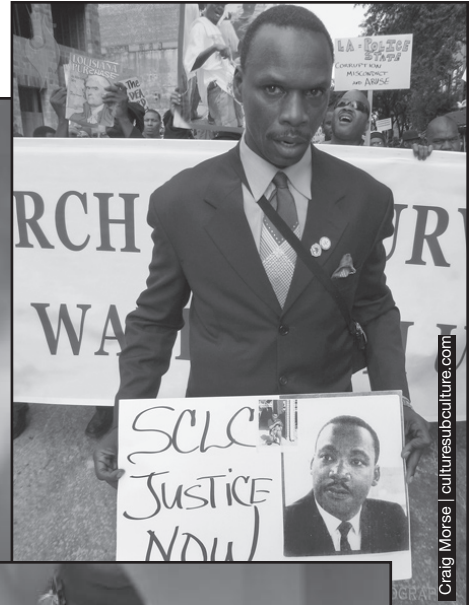
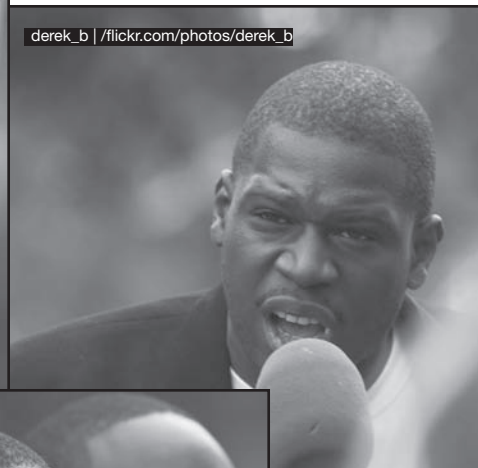
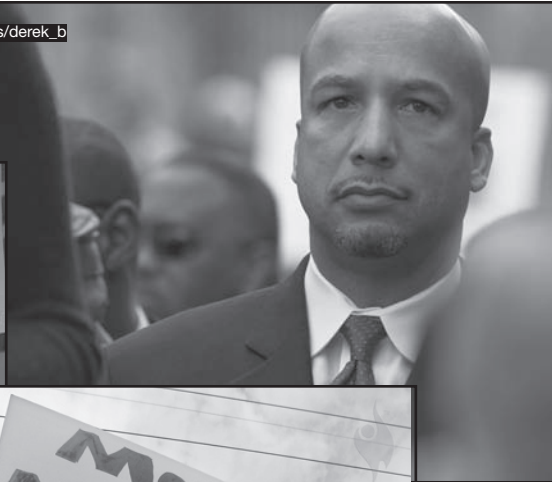
tourism, but they're not spending money and time on communities and helping people out." "You look at all these poor neighborhoods and nobody's doing anything about it; even a year and a half after Katrina you have neighborhoods where people are back and no schools open." He also feels that a dialogue based on mutual respect needs to take place between those in leadership and the citizens "I think the people in leadership need to learn how to better communicate with people in the community, they need

law enforcement need to find a way to deal with arresting and prosecuting criminals that it is not the sole answer, saying we need better education, juvenile diversionary programs and more responsible and accountable parents.

Chief Riley words resonate with many in the community, Tareen Rudolph agrees, "It's going to take everybody the citizens, the police, the school system the family

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Connick Sr. was a dismal 36.9% under Jordan in 2005 it was 52.4% also in the category of judge trials the conviction rate during the last year of his predecessor's administration 47.6% of such trials ended in convictions, while under the present DA the number has risen to 61.8%.

Although there have been improvements, DA Jordan admits that there is still a lot of work to be done within the criminal justice system but he cites one of the major problems his office encounters is non-cooperation from citizens to serve as witnesses and getting them to testify in court. He feels that his team of prosecutors could get even more convictions if people in the community were cooperative with law enforcement. Tareen Rudolph is a young African-American male who is the producer of the documentary film, "New Orleans Exposed", a riveting expose that shows the underbelly of the city and their film looks at several areas

personally or someone they know have had a bad experience with law enforcement." He goes further to say on the question of the feelings residents have about the police, "In poor communities the police don't tend to respect the people the same way as they do in other communities, and usually they come at us in the wrong way which usually puts people on the defensive, so I think until they change the way they relate to the people in the community they will not get their cooperation."

Illegal drugs have been at the center of a great deal of the crime and murders that have taken place in the city according to DA Jordan. "The overwhelming problem in the city appears to be the drug trade, and I feel it's important for us to continue to prosecute violent offenders but in many cases when we look at violent criminals a good deal of the time

early forties and a native New Orleanian who was raised in the Saint Thomas Housing Development, overcoming the odds today he is an entrepreneur, father and husband raising a small family. Throughout his life he has seen many of his friends and relatives lose their lives as the lure of fast money seems the most reasonable route in their "road to riches", and legitimate ways to success seem an exercise in futility. Many of them chartered down a road that led them to early graves, or a life behind bars. His assessment of the city leadership is they have been lackluster in dealing with the problems of neglect that has caused many of the conditions which cause crime, "The city leadership has misplaced priorities, they only seem to be worried about tourists and only worry about crime when the victims are white because they think it will have an effect on

to start by talking to us and not at us, and maybe they can learn something from us that might help fight crime."

In New Orleans everyday young people are losing hope and their minds are never allowed to dream as some suffer the fate of being gunned down in the streets before they can even begin to know what life is about. This is something many families in the Crescent City have endured and Police Superintendent Warren Riley feels that solving the problem of crime goes beyond the reaches of his department; he feels ultimately that solving a host of other societal issues will help in reducing crime and violence. He says while those in

to be accountable in rebuilding this city into what we all want it to be and that is a safe place for all our residents." And as Bart Everson reflects on the death of his friend, and the march that followed he is optimistic about the small steps a few people made to the steps of city hall to address a giant problem, "With all these different people from different backgrounds coming together to protest and march gives me a glimmer of hope that we can solve this problem together."



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NEWSMAKER

IT WAS A VERY GOOD YEAR

Eddie Francis Data News Columnist

Traffic along Veterans Boulevard was backed up for a couple of miles on the night of Sunday, January 21st. The city of Kenner is not used to having such a capacity of visitors so Kenner Police Department cruisers were out in full force. Any outsider would have probably asked if there was a Carnival parade going on until they noticed all of the New Orleans Saints team flags flapping in the foggy night air.

Groups of fans gathered in the parking lot of the daiquiri shop at the corner of Williams and Veterans Boulevards as they awaited the arrival of their New Orleans Saints. Other fans blew their horns as they lined up along Veterans to give their team a heroes' welcome. Some fans even got out of their vehicles, screaming at the tops of their lungs and "high-fiving" each other along the busy boulevard.

One would think that the Saints were on their way to Super Bowl XLI but that was not quite the case. The Saints lost the NFC Championship game to the Chicago Bears. One could only imagine that the Saints' flight home was one filled with deep disappointment. But rare feelings of satisfaction permeate throughout "Who Dat Nation". All of the fans who converged upon the tiny city of Kenner wanted to get onto the grounds of the Louis Armstrong International Airport to say one thing—"Thanks for an outstanding season."

Many Saints fans have joked that the Saints would win the Super Bowl when hell freezes over. Those fans will have to wait another year to don their ice skates, although many were fully prepared to do their best figure skating performances. The beloved Saints left wintry Chicago with a 39-14 loss. Although the bitter taste of defeat went down



hard, fans have kept the dream season in perspective.

Even in Defeat, It's All Good

Edward Triggs, who works in hotel security, said that he lost hope when the Bears extended their lead over the Saints to 25-14. "Man, I stopped watching," he says, "But I'm glad they went this far." Triggs reflects that it was an exciting Saints season because "they kept you on the edge of your seat at all times."

Triggs shares the common sentiment with other fans, however, that the future will only get brighter. Like other fans, he cannot wait for the first regular season kickoff in the 2007-2008 season. "If they do their homework, they'll go (all the way to the Super Bowl)," he says.

Like most places in New Orleans, ASC Dry Cleaners is a center of spirited discussion and debate about the Saints. ASC is a family business so the conversations contain a little extra flavor. The post game discussion is usually lively but this particular discussion is filled with an unusual mix of disappointment and optimism. Brothers Steven, Terry and Bruce Webber all agree that this successful Saints season has created enthusiasm about next season.

Bruce is forgiving of the Saints defeat and eagerly waits for next season. He points out

that Coach Sean Payton made "rookie coach mistakes" which led to the loss. Nevertheless, he beams with excitement having gotten wind that the Saints are interested in picking up a key defensive player from the free agent market. "If they can get him with (Roman) Harper coming back, nobody's going to mess with them."

Terry is intrigued with other fans' expectations for next year. Citing that this is a position that Saints are not used to being in, he wonders how much fans are going to expect next year. "What if they don't make the same kind of run next year? Should we be disappointed or not (if they don't make it to the Super Bowl)?"

Steven expects big things from Coach Sean Payton, although he is cautiously optimistic. "Payton knows the team's weaknesses so they're going to get better." At the same time, he points out that former coach, Jim Haslett, created the same kind of excitement in his first season back in the 2000-2001 season. But he feels that there will be two differences. First, he is confident that Payton will not make the same ill-advised personnel moves that Haslett made. Secondly, he feels confident in quarterback Drew Brees' leadership.

Just the Medicine We Needed

The irony of the Saints magical season was its timeliness. As New Orleanians, South Louisianans and citizens along the Gulf Coast continued to rebuild from Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. After the game, one local talk radio station fielded calls from pleased fans from as far away as Pensacola, Florida. One only had to walk a few feet in certain areas to hear fans agree that the Saints

season helped them deal with the frustrations of rebuilding.

As bitter as the Saints' finale was fans also seem to agree that the excitement the team created during the season overrode the disappointment in the Windy City. "Even when they lost, everyone stayed in good spirits," recalls Steven. He and his brothers feel that successful subsequent seasons will be good for business in New Orleans. The Webber brothers are the owners of ASC Dry Cleaners.

Steven even has a renewed interest in investing in a corporate suite. "I started thinking about it back in 2000 but I would love it now." With a business that is primarily set up as a business-to-business operation, the Webber brothers recognize that the increase in sports and entertainment can filter down to even the smallest of businesses.

Another successful Saints season will not only boost the morale of New Orleanians but it will also boost the city's economy. The best news is that the Saints' success means more sell-outs at the Superdome; and that means more fans in New Orleans spending money. As a business-to-business operation that deals with downtown businesses, that is music to the Webbers' ears.

"From a business standpoint the money is here," says Steven. Like other businesses in the New Orleans area a more active sports and entertainment scene stands to make the Crescent City glow again. Webber recalls, "We had all of those fans coming from other cities, then (New Orleans) got the Bayou Classic and the Sugar Bowl back, then we'll have Essence Fest back in the summer." Next year New Orleans businesses will also benefit from the New Orleans Hornets and the city's first NBA All-Star game. And as a consolation although the Saints did not make it to the big game, two African-Americans will be head coaching the teams participating in the Super Bowl. Johnathan Williams, a die hard saints fan who was visibly disaappointed by the Saints loss was still saw the silver lining behind the cloud saying, "I guess it's alright we've never made it this far before, and it gave the city some much needed attention, and I guess it's alright that we will see two blacks coaching in the Super Bowl but wait until next year it is going to be the black and gold in the Super Bowl."

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News Orleans Data News Weekly

TRAIL BLAZERS

Entrepreneur David DaJon, Sr. Shares His Tools For Success



By Renetta Burrell Perry
Staff Writer

In this fast paced, dog-eat-dog world we live in, we rarely witness the power of generosity in its purest form; where people give of themselves just because. But in post-Katrina New Orleans, one man is determined to change that. He has set out to share his wealth of wisdom and expertise with the masses in hopes that they too can one day savor the same levels of success he has come to know.

Whoever said it's lonely at the top should have adopted the philosophy of New Orleans native David DaJon, Sr., President and CEO of DaJon's Construction and Environmental, Inc. He is a man who is committed to change the landscape of rebuilding in New Orleans making it inclusive of African-American and other minority contractors.

RBP: When most licensed and non-licensed contractors were focusing on the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow after Katrina, you were selflessly concerned about the future of minority

contractors. I've heard about your free training classes where you provide cutting-edge information on the proper avenues to travel when navigating the tricky road to becoming a state licensed contractor. Tell us a little bit about your classes.

DD: During the months of August 2006 – December 2006, we offered volunteer training classes, free-of-charge to the public approximately every Friday night from 7PM – 9PM. Beginning January 2007, class sessions are held based on the number of inquiries received. Initially, we started with seven class participants. That number grew up to fifty [50] new students for each training session within a two month timeframe. We have coached approximately 150 non-licensed contractors over the period of five months.

RBP: You were already an established licensed contractor, why did you feel the need to help others, particularly minorities, get their licenses?

DD: As a licensed contractor, I felt the need to help others because of my passion for sharing knowledge in ways that would be most beneficial to those seeking an understanding of how to acquire their contractor's license and the benefits involved. Becoming a licensed contractor helps a person to fully appreciate their trade. During the process of obtaining my license, I observed that there was a lack of minorities in our community applying for contractor's licenses. However, I notice that others throughout the country were flooding into our state to obtain their contractor's license to take advantage of this soon-to-be developed

economic opportunity. At that time, I made a decision that I would go back into the community and offer free training classes to those in need.

RBP: What do you feel is the biggest obstacle hampering minorities from obtaining their contractor's license?

DD: Most of the minorities that I've come in contact with believe that the procedures for obtaining their contractor's license are intimidating and overwhelming. As a result, it causes them to drawback and not press forward. In other cases, I believe it's either because of a lack of knowledge regarding, and being misinformed.

RBP: What opportunities are available to minority contractors once they become licensed?

DD: To position ourselves to participate in contract biddings and to take full advantage of opportunities that are only available to licensed contractors. The community at large desires to work with contractors that have registered and met State requirements.

RBP: What are your other links to the community?

DD: Prior to hurricane Katrina, I've served as an associate minister in various church congregations throughout the New Orleans area. Currently I am member of the Community Based Coalition Political Organization and am a Member of NMAC [National Association of Minority Contractors/ New Orleans Chapter].

RBP: What is the best advice that you would give to others trying to get

started and/or become licensed?

DD: Believe in yourself that you can accomplish the goal of obtaining your LA State Contractor's License. Unless you prepare yourself for these 10-15 years of construction activities that is going to take place in our community, you will miss out on this one in the lifetime opportunity. Hey, just do it, you need to be licensed. Stand strong and be counted in the land of opportunity for changing our community to a better place to live. Take action by getting involved in improving our standard of life, our income potential, and our self-worth. Don't be afraid to embrace change to protect our future livelihoods. We need to change our mentality to believe yes, we do deserve the best and work towards pursuing your dreams of endless possibilities. Take a leap forward into a brighter more prosperous future. Stay focused and immovable until you have reached your goals and even then, don't forget where we have come from and where we are headed which has no limits.

RBP: What and or who has been your inspiration in life?

DD: My mother because of her encouraging spirit, always inspiring me to do my best at whatever I do. My father also, because of his strength, hard work and his willingness to help others in their time of need. And the unselfish spirit of our great leader Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. as he paved the way for some many then and even now. Dr. King paid the price for this land of opportunity. The vision he shared that things would be better for all if we work together in unity as one.

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DATA ZONE

Ashe Hosts the Governor

photos by: Glenn Jones

Governor Kathleen Babineaux Blanco, Lt. Gov. Mitch Landrieu and officials from Louisiana Economic Development (LED) and the Louisiana Recovery Authority (LED) held a press conference on Tuesday, January 23 to announce that applications will be accepted beginning that day for the new \$138 million Business Recovery Grant and Loan Program. The pilot program is designed to help small businesses still struggling in the wake of hurricanes Katrina and Rita. The deadline for submitting completed grant applications is Feb. 16 at 5 p.m. Loan applications will be accepted until available funds are depleted. Business may be eligible for both the loan and grant programs. Applications for both must be submitted in person at one of the intake centers established by participating community-based financial organizations.

The announcement was held at Ashe Cultural Arts Center in New Orleans was followed by an orientation and application workshop to help business owners evaluate their eligibility and understand the application process. Data was there, and so was New Orleans!



Crowd at Ashe waits for the Governor



Keith Hitchens of BellSouth and Vaughn Furia of Newcorp, await the announcement



State officials speak on Recipient Plan

DATA ZONE



Leah Chase, Owner of Dooky Chase and Christy Wallace came to hear about the programs available.



Sandra Berry of the Neighborhood Gallery stands in the long line for an application



Saraiyah Daste and Kare Sloane hand out information to participants



Samantha and Cynthia Beaulieu discuss the handouts at the conference.



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Tuesday, January 30
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8:00 ~ Cindy Scott

Wednesday, January 31
5:30 ~ Richard Knox
8:00 ~ John Boutte

Thursday, February 1
5:30 ~ Richard Knox
8:00 ~ George French

Friday, February 2
7:00 ~ Fred Sanders
9:30 ~ Leah Chase

Saturday, February 3
7:00 ~ Richard Knox
9:30 ~ Ingrid Lucia

Sunday, February 4
5:30 ~ Steve Burtchaell
8:00 ~ Philip Manuel

Entertainment subject to change.

IN THE SPIRIT

A Test of Faith, While Enduring a Storm



Dr. Aaron E. Harold
Data Columnist

Many of us who lived in the New Orleans area and in the Gulf Coast Region experienced one of the worst storms of our lives. Hurricane Katrina came through with unimaginable devastation and destruction. She left part of our city in ruins and left many of us mentally and emotionally disturbed. Hurricane Katrina took us from our comfort zone, and placed us in a situation that we have never been in. Many of us lost things that were very dear and sentimental to us. People lost houses, material things, jobs that we've occupied for many of years, and even things that can never be replaced such as loved ones.

Someone may ask the question, "Why did God allow Hurricane Katrina to come to our city and surrounding region; why did he allow many to suffer and some of the innocent to perish in the midst of Katrina?" Our answers to our questions lie right before our faces, as it relates to the word of Almighty God. The book of Job, in the Bible will answer many of the questions that people have concerning the outcome of Hurricane Katrina.

In Job Chapter 1, beginning at verse 1 it reads; "There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job, and that man was perfect or spiritually mature in his faith with God. The Bible also says that Job was upright, which means he was a righteous man that lived according to God's standards. However, it doesn't mean that Job never made any mistakes in the eyesight of God, because there is no perfect human being. The Bible teaches us in the Book of Romans Chapter 3, that "All have sinned and fell short, or missed the mark of God's way of life for us to live. Therefore, God sent some storms in Job's life to test

his faith. Even though Job loved God and served him faithfully, it didn't exclude Job from having troubles in his life.

Many of us who choose to love God and serve him will also experience trials and tribulations from time to time. God sends storms to test our faith in him. In the Book of Job, Chapter 1 verses 13-19, Job's faith was tested by God. Just like many of our loses during Hurricane Katrina, Job's lost was great and enormous. The Bible tells us that in those verses Job lost his children to a windstorm that caused the death of all of his children. His servants were killed and all of his camels were stolen from him. There also was a lightning storm that was sent by God, and all of his sheep and servants were killed in that storm. In spite of all the bad things that happened to Job, he never lost his faith in God. Job made a decision to continually serve God.

I say to those who have faced some of the most difficult times in your lives that storms will come to test our faith in God, but we must remember that no matter what may come our way, we must keep believing in God. We must also remember to love one another and continue to help one another in these difficult times. We also need to know that there is a rainbow at the end of every storm. That rainbow is the hope that we have in God Almighty.

Many of us have said that we lost everything in Katrina, but we really didn't lose everything. Most importantly, we still have our lives, we still have our faith, and that means that there is still hope for tomorrow.

I believe that this year is going to be a great year for all of us that will keep the faith in God and our Savior Jesus Christ. May God Bless each and everyone of you.

Dr. Aaron E. Harold is the pastor of New Millennium Breakthrough Ministries.

To contact Dr. Harold with your comments or suggested topics you can e-mail him rharold1@cox.net or call (504) 813-5767

DOLLARS & SENSE

Changing Jobs? Know Your Options



Donald Smith

GE-31651 (03/05) (exp. 03/07)

There are many new challenges to face if you happen to be changing jobs or retiring – not the least of which is the decision of what to do with the retirement funds that have accumulated in your 401(k) and other retirement plans over the years of service with your employers. These decisions may have a significant impact on your future financial security in retirement.

Option 1) Your employer hands you a check for the amount in your retirement plan. This may look like a bonanza, but selecting this option could be a mistake. First, your employer is required to withhold 20% from your lump sum distribution, so you will only receive 80% of the amount you are entitled to. Second, if you are younger than 59 1/2, you may be subject to a 10% additional federal income tax penalty for early withdrawal. Third, you are liable for paying income taxes on the full amount – if you fail to rollover your funds into an IRA within 60 days.

Option 2) Leave the money with your old employer. If you have more than \$5000 in your former employer's retirement plan, you can usually leave the money where it is. (Check with your employer.) The advantage of doing this is that it relieves you of making a decision for the time being while maintaining the tax deferral of your assets. The downside is that you are limited to the investment choices offered by your ex-employer – or even fewer choices, since some companies have additional restrictions for non-active employees. Additional disadvantages are that you cannot make new contributions to your account.

Option 3) Move your retirement money to your new employer. This option only works if you are moving to another job. Even then, your new employer may not accept rollovers from a previous plan or may impose a waiting period. Also, the investment options offered by your new employer may not be as extensive as you want. The benefit is that you maintain your assets' tax deferral and benefit from the convenience of having your assets in one place.

Option 4) Put the money into a traditional IRA Rollover. By having your former employer's retirement plan pay the IRA custodian directly, you avoid the 20% withholding or any penalties. There are numerous benefits to your own IRA Rollover:

• A wide choice of investment opportunities – you can select the stocks, bonds, mutual funds or other investments that are right for you.

• The ability to withdraw without penalty for some purposes. Withdrawals can be made without penalty by taking a series of substantially equal periodic payments for at least five years or until after you reach age 59 1/2. Withdrawals are subject to normal income tax treatment and may be subject to an additional 10% federal income tax penalty. Thus, if you are planning to retire before you reach age 59 1/2, this method can enable you to dip into your IRA Rollover without penalty. Please note, there may be other eligible retirement plans which can accept funds.

Contact your financial professional to explore the details and decide if an IRA Rollover is right for you.

AXA Advisors, LLC does not provide tax advice. Please consult with your tax advisor regarding your individual circumstances.

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STATE & LOCAL NEWS

Cornel West: Prophet of Hope

Edwin Buggage
Editor

Renown Princeton University scholar, author, and social critic Dr. Cornel West recently visited New Orleans for a speaking engagement at Tulane University during the Martin Luther King Jr. Week of Peace. It is an annual event where several universities across the city namely, Dillard, Xavier,

rhythmic verses of a Baptist preacher and challenged the audience to not just talk about but to live, breathe, and practice Dr. King's message of unconditional love. He also told them and not to let those who continue to hate impede the progress of citizens who have a sincere desire for a colorblind society and they should continue to blaze the trail in their

bitter, and let hate devour your soul and humanity because that will leave you powerless."

Dr. West who is also a vocal critic of the war in Iraq used the war on terror and the historical struggle of African-Americans as a metaphor for larger human problems in the struggle for peace in America and it's faltering image in the global community. "This country can learn from the history of how they've treated a blues people and lost touch with its democracy and humanity." And he also talked about the need for a doctrine of love and understanding and that today America is in transition as the country moves towards being a global player in this brave new world where the division of people according to race and nationhood are becoming more blurred and complex. He also addressed the hedonism that has run rampant in American society telling the audience your net worth is not your self worth, and that wealth and greatness are not mutually inclusive.

The audience's reception of the speech was mixed as Dr. West pulled no punches as his words were less platitudinous and lofty but were challenging, engaging, and engrossing as he took the crowd to task by telling them that we have to stop being well adjusted to injustice and have the courage to take action. At the conclusion of his speech he received a rousing round of applause and engaged in a brief question and answer session that at times became heated but in a spirit that was to foster love, compassion, growth, and understanding, and with the hope to obliterate misunderstanding, intolerance and hate. When the session ended the crowd exited the building as many chatted outside the auditorium in small groups about the words of Dr. West and discussing how they could further the dream and mission of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. a lofty yet elusive and unfulfilled dream; although today we are closer to it than we were during the life of Dr. King, but it is still a work in progress.

Photos By Irving Johnson III

Scandal Rocks
Former Morial
Associates

By Elizabeth Julien

In an unusual turn of events Sunday, January 14th marked an end to the continuous pleas of innocence for two key defendants in the investigation centering on associates of former New Orleans Mayor Marc Morial which suddenly changed directions.

Stan "Pampy" Barre, owner of the well known New Orleans eatery Pampy's, and Kerry DeCay, former director of property management for the city, plead guilty to charges of steering and the siphoning monies from a lucrative contract to study energy efficiency; both had declared their innocence for nearly a year.

Both Barre and DeCay plead guilty to conspiracy, mail fraud and obstruction of justice. As a result of their confessions both men may be facing a maximum sentence of 20 years in prison plus restitution of nearly twice the value of everything they gained from their activities. Because of their early guilty pleas before their trials were set to begin, it is likely that because of their cooperation the judge may exercise leniency in regards to their sentencing, now scheduled for April 18th.

This recent development has raised the number to eleven of the defendants in this investigation who have now pleaded guilty and agreed to cooperate with the federal government.

At the center of this investigation is a contract awarded to Johnson Controls Inc. a Fortune 500 company that specializes in energy efficiency. According to the complaint, the contract with the city grossed \$2.1 million in fees and a \$90,000 contract for project management. Prosecutors have said that Barre, who held no official position in the Morial administration, profited close to \$800,000 while DeCay received about \$100,000 in fees and kickbacks.

Former Mayor Marc Morial himself has not been indicted and U.S. Attorney Jim Letten, has never directly implicated Morial in the investigation, but he has made it clear in previous statement to the media that Morial is on the minds of investigators, saying that the defendants in the case used the power awarded to them based on their association with Morial. But also he fully understands that the actions of Morial's cohorts alone are insufficient in attempting to build a case against the former mayor.

Throughout the duration of this investigation the government has been portraying Barre as the lead in the Johnson Controls contract. Previous court filings and summaries by the prosecution say Barre arranged for DeCay to organize the contractor to do non-energy work which would directly benefit him while he arranged a \$2.5 million subcontract for Moss Creek Development, which is owned by an associate of Barre.

These recent pleas have created a snowball effect; Friday Reginald Walker the subcontractor working with Barre plead guilty on two charges of mail fraud and was set to testify in the case against Barre and DeCay a move which may have altered their thoughts about a pursuing a trial.

Both Barre and Walker have been implicated in other deals as well involving similar questionable activities. Barre and Walker shared involvement in a Browning-Ferris Industries contract while DeCay has admitted to shaking down several other subcontractors. Those include Specialty Machine Service, Golden Hammer Construction, National Contractor Services and G*M Electric. According to the summary, the gifts received from these deals range from a pool pump to almost \$30,000 cash from National Contractor Services. The owners of each of these businesses have pleaded guilty as well.

More people close to the former mayor are being implicated namely attorney Roy Rodney, and former Morial insider Robert Tucker. While the case against the alleged "leader" Stan "Pampy" Barre is closed this probe into corruption and fraud seems far from over.



Tulane, and Loyola come together to pay homage to Dr. King and to re-commit themselves to his mission of universal brotherhood that he spoke of in his famous speech "I Have A Dream" and to reflect on the life and legacy of this iconic figure in American history.

The outspoken and animated started his speech with the words of Greek philosopher Socrates by saying, "The unexamined life is not worth living and the examined life is painful." Dr. West gave a heartfelt speech that was an examination of truth and gave his prescription for justice; he challenged members of the audience to continue to take action by being courageous in the fight against injustice around the world. During his visit in the city he toured the ravaged and still mostly uninhabited Lower Ninth Ward. Visibly dismayed and disappointed at the level of progress after the storm, his voice rang vociferously as he chimed in reflecting on the inequality that existed in the city pre-Katrina, "Today we are talking about what's happening as a result of the storm, but we must not forget, the social hurricane that were occurring in the city before the levees broke."

As he continued his impassioned speech West spoke peppered his speech with the

quest and to do it with zest and fortitude in their fight for justice. West caused a bit of a stir among the racially mixed audience as he talked specifically about the plight of African-Americans and their role in the history of America



and overcoming obstacles and remaining resilient in the face of oppression, "It has been a struggle to be recognized as equals in a society where one has been deemed, less human, less moral, with no social value, and devalued as simply a commodity."

He continued by say, "But in spite of all which has been thrust upon you, do not yourself to become

NATIONAL NEWS

Inside Dr. King's Private Library

By. Marisela Santana

Special to the NNPA from Wave Newspapers

LOS ANGELES (NNPA) – When people all over the world paused last week to reflect on the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., they thought of his historic “I Have A Dream” speech. But “American Morning” anchor Soledad O’Brien, who reported the five-part “Words that Changed a Nation” series airing last week on CNN, found that there was so much more to talk about.



CNN Morning anchor Soledad O'Brien said working on the King project “elicited some feelings of humility”

In an agreement reached last year with the King family, O’Brien and CNN were granted exclusive access to the papers from King’s personal library, of which some 10,000 pieces are housed in an archive at his alma mater, Morehouse College in Atlanta.

When O’Brien first learned of the network’s plans for the special, she was unaware that it would allow her become one the very few people to see up-close, and actually touch, King’s personal notes with her own hands. This intimate look at his personal philosophy and theology — which often revealed King’s inner doubts and fears — gave O’Brien insight into his transformation from a preacher in Montgomery, Ala. to an international human rights icon.

Handling material this historically valuable also made her a little nervous.

“I almost didn’t want to touch anything ... I was afraid to drop one of his books,” O’Brien said by telephone from New York. “I was pretty terrified ... to be holding this piece of loose-leaf paper in [my] hand with his writings on it.

“You forget how relevant [his] words are even today, nearly 40 years after his death. ... When you read someone’s words, you get insight, you see the words crossed out, that he decided weren’t strong enough, you can see how his mind is morphing, changing, you sort of get a glimpse inside his mind, of someone who is working not just for himself, but for a nation.”

Obtaining access to the papers was only part of O’Brien’s highly personal series on King; she also interviewed several of the civil rights leader’s closest confidants. Paired with his writings, their insight, she believes, can further open the nation’s eyes to who King really was and what he was thinking.

“It’s definitely a history that I’m familiar with, and most people are, in broad strokes,” she said. “But when you look closely, when you open a book and you see the words that he [Dr. King] circled and the lines that he underlined, and what he wrote in the

margins ... you can follow the movement as it was growing and being shaped ... it’s fascinating to be able to connect the dots.”

The conversations with King intimates proved revealing. Former U.N. Ambassador Andrew Young, activist Dorothy Cotton and Rep. John Lewis (D-Ga.) were among those who participated, revealing, for example, that the world-changing “I Have A Dream” speech was ad-libbed at the last moment during the March on Washington, D.C. on August 28, 1963

Although his papers show that King had indeed been developing the concept of his “dream,” they also uncover a little-known fact: that he had worked on the famed speech for hours and hours under the title “Normalcy, Never Again.”

“It was never called ‘I Have a Dream’ but no one has ever really known that,” O’Brien said. “We learn that in the middle of the speech, he suddenly decides to ad-lib ... that the one surviving text of his ‘I Have a Dream’ speech doesn’t have a word of ‘I Have a Dream’ in it.”

Of all of the on-camera discussions lined up for the series, O’Brien says it was Young who delivered the most powerful interview. “Here you have a man who has told this story thousands of times, and he’s crying, and I’m crying and the crew is crying,” she said. “I interviewed him for hours and at the end we talked about the day that Martin Luther King Jr. was shot. He told us that even though he’s done so much over the last 40 years ... everything he has done pales in comparison to his work with Dr. King.”

As personally touching as the experience has been for O’Brien — who will receive the President’s Award at the NAACP Image Award in March — she hopes her work can help open eyes to King’s many dimensions as a person.

“There was so much more to him than that speech,” O’Brien said. “Everybody who is fighting for their country, for their rights, they all know the ‘I Have A Dream’ speech — it’s one of the reasons people remember it because it’s just that powerful and it defined a movement — but it wasn’t the culmination of a movement at all. It was the beginning of a movement.

“It’s easy to know the history and forget the words,” she went on. “In the big picture, one forgets the sacrifices people made for our rights, that people literally died for those rights, that are taken for granted.”

O’Brien also confirmed talk that CNN is working on a related special, yet to be written but scheduled to air during Black History Month, that asks the whether there will ever be another civil rights leader on par with King. “I thought after Katrina, that someone would emerge,” O’Brien said. “We thought there would be an event that would propel someone into a leadership position like that, just a moment in time that would come, but I don’t think we really saw that.”

For now, O’Brien is satisfied to have played such a central role in shedding new light on King’s work. For the internationally recognized television personality, it seems the project also elicited some feelings of humility.

“I’m one year older than Dr. King was when he was killed,” she said. “Yet I don’t feel young and I don’t feel that I’ve accomplished so much. Not when you can go back and read Martin Luther King Jr.’s personal documents. You feel that there is still so much that you can do to make a difference in the world.”

Dreamgirls scores at Golden Globe

By. Marc E. Warren

Special to the NNPA from Afro Newspapers

NNPA- Though Dreamgirls is currently playing at limited number of theaters across the United States, the film picked up top honors at the 64th Annual Golden Globe Awards, held in Los Angeles. The popular movie, which has garnered rave reviews from critics, earned



three Golden Globe Awards including Best Motion Picture - Musical or Comedy, Best Performance by an Actress in a Supporting Role in a Motion Picture (Jennifer Hudson) and Best Performance by an Actor in a Supporting Role in a Motion Picture (Eddie Murphy). Actors Beyonce’ Knowles and Jamie Foxx were not nominated. Director Bill Condon, known for his work on the Oscar-winning movie musical Chicago was also ignored. Newcomer and former American Idol finalist Jennifer Hudson walked away with her first Golden Globe Award for her critically-acclaimed performance as Effie Melody White in the long-awaited screen version of Dreamgirls. Hudson has received solid reviews for her hailed performance as the rejected members of all-girl group, The Dreams. Hudson said in her acceptance speech, “I had always dreamed, but I never ever dreamed this big. This goes far beyond anything I could have ever imagined.”

Eddie Murphy received long overdue recognition with his win in the Best Performance by an Actor in a Supporting Role in a Motion Picture category for his unforgettable performance as James “Thunder” Early.

Murphy, who nearly steals the “thunder” from his Dreamgirls co-stars, is a shoe-in for an Oscar nomination. During Murphy’s acceptance speech, he thanked producer David Geffen in a joking manner for encouraging him to “work for free.”

A teary-eye Forest Whitaker took the top award - Best Performance by an Actor in a Motion Picture- Drama - for his performance as the late Ugandan dictator Idi Amin in The Last King of Scotland.

The Golden Globes Awards were founded by the Hollywood Foreign Press, which consists of Los Angeles-based journalists working for overseas publications.

The Golden Globes Awards are thought to predict both the nominees and winners of the Academy Awards.

The 79th Annual Academy Awards is scheduled to take place on Feb. 25, 2007.

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